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Editorial

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A Word from the Editor

Dr. Niall McElwee

The Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies was conceived to serve the needs of the social care student, practitioner, supervisor, manager and academics and policy makers connected, in the widest sense, to social care and child and youth care. We accept that the *core* area of knowledge from which this profession has developed emanates from direct involvement in the day-to-day lives of children and youth and their families. From this perspective, the practicing social care worker is considered an expert and we very much welcome articles from you.

This journal is committed to the task of encouraging papers from the field of practice. The journal has evolved since 1998 into an interdisciplinary peer-refereed journal that aims to connect, renew, and reenergize those people who share a commitment to expanding the knowledge base of social care.

The review editorial board includes professionals with diverse backgrounds in social care, child and youth care, third-level education, special education, counselling, juvenile justice, mental health, family support, community-based and residential treatment, child protection, substance abuse, and advocacy for youth at risk and our partner countries include Canada, the US, Scotland, South Africa and New Zealand.

The core sponsor of the Journal is now Community Children Centres Ltd based in Blessington, County Wicklow in Ireland. CCC Ltd has signed contracts with the journal editor for an initial period of three years thus taking

us into 2008. This is significant for the Journal as we, like many journals, have been trying to locate dedicated sponsorship to ensure continuity of print editions and can now concentrate on publishing voices from the field without distraction.

1. Notes for authors and contributors:

The Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies welcomes contributions on all aspects of social care & child and youth care and aims to present youth issues and research in a way that is accessible and reader-friendly but grounded in sound methodologies.

Intending contributors should thoroughly familiarise themselves with the journal.

Academic papers will be reviewed by two external reviewers and by the editor and deputy editor.

In general, manuscripts should not exceed 6,000 words. Text style should conform to the house style of the journal with references presented in the author-date system. (APA style is acceptable.) If including tables and figures, please supply the raw data as well. It is important that you include with the manuscript a short abstract, and for each author, a short biographical statement, name, affiliation, mailing address, phone and fax numbers and email address and an abstract of 300-500 words.

Submission of a manuscript implies commitment to publish only in the journal. Manuscripts should not have been published elsewhere in substantially similar form or content, nor be submitted simultaneously to other journals.

Manuscripts should be emailed to the Editor at:
socsciconsultancy@gmail.com,

A return email will be sent to the author(s) and formal review responses will be sent out within two months of receipt.

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2. Guide for authors and peer reviewers

The Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies aims to provide readers with up-to-date research and practice information that might usefully inform their work in their studies and the field of practice. The Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies encourages potential authors to communicate to a wide audience. Papers that have been successfully peer reviewed may, therefore, differ in appearance and length from those in traditional scholarly journals but must nevertheless meet similar criteria. The review editorial board will make every effort to assist authors in this process.

The criteria for papers published in the Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies are:

1. research and theory should be of a high standard but be communicated in a reader-friendly manner;
2. policy issues should be substantive and addressed objectively; and
3. the work should clearly articulate the implications of the research, thereby clarifying policy problems and (ideally) illustrating solutions.

Contributors are asked to write to a word length of 6,000 words or under. Due to this space restriction, background reading and the methodology or 'science' need to be summarised very succinctly. Authors are encouraged to focus on findings, discussion, implications and recommendations. The space available should be used to 'advance' knowledge of the issue or subject; we therefore prefer that common knowledge be accepted as 'given'.

To assist potential authors, we outline what our peer reviewers are asked to look for in submitted manuscripts: Does the paper reflect a knowledge of substantive issues in the area of social care and child and youth care?

1. Does the research, review or argument that forms the basis of the paper conform to standards acceptable to the particular field of study?
2. Do the conclusions represent a logical interpretation of the authors' research or review?
3. Do the authors discuss other relevant research or literature? Is this reflected in the literature sourced?
4. Does the paper contribute to the body of knowledge on the subject?
5. Would you recommend publication as a peer-reviewed paper in the Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies?

3. Publication as a non-peer reviewed paper

Papers which do not meet the rigorous standards or depth normally required of scholarly, peer-reviewed work, but we consider are well written, well sourced and raise interesting issues which deserve attention, may, with the authors' permission, be published in the Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies as non-peer reviewed articles.

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¹ Gratitude to *Youth Studies Australia* for the Journal Notes to Authors and Contributors template.

In this Volume
Niall McElwee, PhD, Editor

This volume of the *Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies* carries, as has become the norm, includes papers from Ireland and Canada. We are fortunate as a journal to have a backlog of papers waiting for publication and we would ask our contributors to be patient with us. We try to give the reader a sample of different writing styles, commentaries, approaches to research and, of course, opinions from our friends in social care and child and youth care. We even allow our contributors room to manoeuvre in their referencing systems! We appreciate and seek feedback on our papers. Please email me at socsciconsultancy@gmail.com and mark these 'Letters to the Editor'.

The opening article by a Government of Ireland Scholar, Liz Cambell, seeks to establish whether the purported benefits of the much-discussed Garda diversion programme outweigh any infringements on the rights of the child. A brief elucidation of the salient provisions of part 4 was followed by viewing the application of the Programme to date. The question is posed, are traditional due process rights relevant or necessary in the context of the Garda diversion programme? Are the factors differentiating the diversion programme from court proceedings so significant as to warrant the application of a modified rights framework which departs from the conventional due process model? Finally, a proposed legislative amendment which would permit the fact of participation in the diversion programme to be cited in court and which has the capacity to alter the tenor of the debate in a fundamental sense was considered.

Our second paper from two of our international colleagues provides us with an overview of the changing nature of family homelessness in the US and Canada, the current literature on homeless families and their children and reports on a Canadian example of community-based research on family homelessness. Colleen Kasting & Sybille Artz show us that poverty, family violence, a history of abuse and problems with mental health and substance misuse are the dominant factors that contribute to family homelessness. Where have we heard that one before I wonder? Their research also illustrates that the children of homeless families face grave risks, and makes explicit the need for immediate policy and practice initiatives to end family homelessness. There are lessons here for us in the Irish context too.

Next, we are taken to *Poetry Corner* which I have decided to include to give us a break (much-needed I hear you say) from academic musings. I have chosen four pieces from Kelly Mason, a wonderfully energised young woman I met in New Brunswick. Her poetry speaks for itself. I hope that this gives other readers the bug to also commit pen to paper or fingers to keys to allow creative writing to become a mainstay in the journal.

Liz Butler and Jim Phelan then move us to a paper which examines perceptions regarding rural male suicide and the preventative services available in Co. Kilkenny, Ireland to combat the problem. They note the disturbing statistic that for every four male suicides, there is one female suicide. They suggest that the problem is becoming more a rural rather than an urban issue. One of the interesting aspects of their research is that they set out to identify gaps in services and existing policies in addressing suicide among young rural men as we more often see material on their urban counterparts. Data was obtained from interviews with the service providers and also from focus group discussions with 15 young rural Kilkenny men.

Our final paper comments on a study completed in Cork, Ireland where a sample of 40 older persons, (30 female; 10 male) half of whom resided in public and half of whom resided in private nursing homes across Cork city and county participated with Cathy Galvin and Aine De Roiste. Participants were interviewed about their experience of entering and living in nursing

home care and the qualitative data yielded from the interviews identified that the majority of the sample entered into care due to poor physical or mental health. The features of residential care reported that were liked were an enhanced sense of security, the company of others and being looked after. The features of residential care reported that were disliked were the lack of control over ones daily life and residential care being a very 'public experience' characterised by a lack of privacy. We, thus, get a valuable insight into life into elder care and we have much to learn from our seniors.